REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in this application. The Examiner's several courtesies extended to the Applicants' representative during several telephone interviews dated on June 20, 2002 are noted with appreciation. For purposes of expedition, independent claims 1, 7 and 12 have been amended to incorporate the limitation from dependent claim 19 as expressly identified by the Examiner on page 3 of the Office action in order to place the instant application in condition for allowance. Dependent claim 19 has been amended to avoid redundancy. Entry of the foregoing amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116(b) because those amendments simply respond to the issues raised in the final rejection, no new issues are raised, no further search is required, and the foregoing amendments are believed to remove the basis of the outstanding rejections and to place all claims in condition for allowance. The foregoing amendments, or explanations, could not have been made earlier because these issues had not previously been raised.

Claims 1-28 stand been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Heil et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,173,374 as modified to incorporate selected features from the newly cited Intelligent I/O Architecture Specification, Version 1.5, March 1997 for reasons stated on pages 1-10 of the Office action. As previously discussed, Applicants maintain the position that the rejection of claims 1-28 is severely flawed both legally and factually for reasons previously presented on pages 5-19 of the Amendment filed on March 29, 2002, and need not be re-stated herein. Claims 1-28 need not be amended in order to be

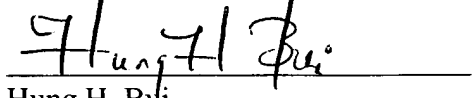
patentable over the Examiner's proposed combination of Heil '374 and the Intelligent I/O Architecture Specification. However, in the interest of expedition, independent claims 1, 7 and 12 have been amended, as discussed earlier, to place the instant application in condition to be passed to issue without further delay.

In view of the foregoing amendments to claims 1, 7, 12 and 19, arguments and remarks, all claims are deemed to be allowable and this application is believed to be in condition to be passed to issue as process claim 22 already contains similar limitations. Should any questions remain unresolved, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' attorney at the Washington DC area office at (703) 312-6600.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims. The attached page is captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made**."

Please charge any shortage of fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, No. 01-2135 (Application No. 219.36435X00), and please credit any excess fees to said deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus LLP



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 7, 12 and 19, as follows:

1. (Thrice Amended) An input/output platform (IOP) access module installed in a host system for providing input/output device access between the host system and another system, via a data network, said IOP access module comprising:

a Local Transport arranged to provide an interface to an input/output platform (IOP) supporting an array of input/output devices;

a Remote Transport arranged to provide an interface to said another system, via said data network; and

a Connection Manager arranged to establish connection services and to create a direct call path between the Local Transport and the Remote Transport so as to provide access to input/output devices, wherein the Connection Manager inquires the Local Transport to determine the number of input/output platforms (IOPs), builds an IOP descriptor structure for each input/output platform (IOP) which includes an exported table of function call pointers and the context required by the Local Transport to communicate with the input/output platform (IOP).

7. (Thrice Amended) A host system, comprising:

a processor including an operating system (OS);

an array of storage devices;

a driver module for exporting local storage device access onto a computer network, said driver module comprising:

a device driver module arranged to provide an interface to said array of local storage devices;

a host driver module arranged to provide an interface to the operating system (OS), said host driver module comprising a Local Transport which communicates with the device driver module, a Remote Transport which provides an interface to said computer network, and a Connection Manager which establishes connection services with remote systems on said computer network and coordinates functions responsible for creating a direct call path between the Local Transport and the Remote Transport to provide access to said storage devices, including to determine, via the Local Transport, the number of input/output platforms (IOPs), build an IOP descriptor structure for each input/output platform (IOP) including an exported table of function call pointers and the context required by the Local Transport to communicate with the input/output platform (IOP); and

a communication layer which supports communications between the host driver module and the device driver module.

14. (Amended) A driver configuration of a host server for exporting local storage device access onto a computer network, comprising:

an input/output platform (IOP) arranged to control an array of local storage devices; and

a system driver module comprising:

a Local Transport arranged to provide an interface to said input/output platform (IOP);

a Remote Transport arranged to provide an interface to said computer network; and

a Connection Manager arranged to establish connection services with remote servers on said computer network and coordinate functions responsible for creating a direct call path between the Local Transport and the Remote Transport to provide access to the local storage devices, including to determine, via the Local Transport, the number of input/output platforms (IOPs), build an IOP descriptor structure for each input/output platform (IOP) including an exported table of function call pointers and the context required by the Local Transport to communicate with the input/output platform (IOP).

19. (Amended) The driver configuration of claim 15, wherein, upon initialization, said Local Transport scans the local bus so as to locate and initialize all local input/output platforms (IOPs) and builds an opaque "context" structure for each input/output platform (IOP), wherein said Remote Transport

prepares to accept requests from a remote server through said computer network, and wherein said Connection Manager [~~queries said Local Transport so as to determine the number of input/output platforms (IOPs), builds an IOP descriptor structure for each input/output platform (IOP) which includes an exported table of function call pointers and the context required by the Local Transport to communicate with the input/output platform (IOP), and finally~~] further establishes a network management communication channel through the Remote Transport after building the IOP descriptor structure, which waits for an external connection from said remote server on said computer network for exporting local device access onto said computer network using said direct call path between the Local Transport and the Remote Transport.